Background

This is the first statewide information technology plan for the State of North Dakota. House Bill 1034, passed by the Fifty-fifth Legislative Assembly, modified North Dakota Century Code (NDCC) 54-44.2 to require that each state agency submit a technology plan to the Information Services Division (ISD) prior to January 15th of each even numbered year. Based on the legislation, ISD developed and issued guidelines in September of 1997 for submitting technology plans. Agencies, institutions and departments prepared their plans based on the guidelines. In an iterative process, they also used the technology plan to build their budget requests for the 1999-2001 biennium.

Based on the plans submitted by agencies, institutions and departments, and meetings with those entities, ISD prepared the Statewide Information Technology Plan to meet the requirement of NDCC 54-44.2. This plan sets forth a vision for information technology for the state, describes the information technology architecture and makes recommendations to address issues uncovered during the planning process. State agency plans and projects are summarized in this plan to provide specific information about the strategies for using technology in each agency. Copies of this plan are distributed to members of the Legislative Assembly as directed by the Legislative Council. The plan will also be available on ISD's web site.

In addition to reviewing technology plans from state agencies, ISD is required to meet at least twice each year to coordinate information technology systems and services with the Board of Higher Education. ISD is also required to conduct conferences and meetings once each year with political subdivisions to review and coordinate information technology services. These meetings have been used to gather an understanding of the unique requirements of these entities and to develop specific areas of coordination. Reports regarding the coordination of services with higher education and political subdivisions have been given to the Legislative Interim Committee on Information Technology. The information gained has been incorporated in the development of the Statewide Information Technology Plan.

ISD was also given responsibility for developing statewide information technology policies, standards and guidelines with the input from state agencies, institutions and departments. A committee of state agency technology coordinators was formed to review and make recommendations to standards proposed by ISD. ISD also reviewed the standards with the Legislative Interim Committee on Information Technology. The standards and policies form the basis for the information technology architecture that is included as part of the Statewide Information Technology Plan.

ISD has the authority under NDCC 54-44.2 to review the information management of executive branch state agencies, institutions and departments. The review will include an evaluation of the organization's planning effectiveness, conformance to its strategic plan, compliance with statewide policies and standards, asset quality, training methods and contract management. If ISD finds that an agency has repeated instances of non-compliance with the statewide standards and policies, they are required to report the issue to the Legislative Audit and Fiscal Review Committee. Single instances may be reported if deemed necessary. In this first planning cycle, agency technology plans were developed prior to the creation of statewide standards and the Statewide Information Technology Plan. Future agency technology plans will be reviewed for alignment with the standards and the statewide plan.

Three new positions were approved in ISD's 1997-1999 budget request to carry out the new responsibilities as outlined in HB 1034. ISD has filled two business analyst positions to support the creation of statewide technology standards and guidelines and to prepare the Statewide Information Technology Plan. The third position has been filled to support the required compliance functions. These positions will continue to be part of ISD's budget request as long as the functions are needed.

The technology planning process will be an ongoing, iterative process that will improve over time. Following the January 15, 1998 planning deadline, ISD conducted a survey of state agencies concerning the planning process. This survey, as well as discussions with state agencies and other stakeholders, will form the basis for improvements that will be implemented in the next planning cycle.